



Inside Congress

by United States Representative George R. Nethercutt, Jr.

For the week ending June 14, 2002

Welcome to this week's edition of Inside Congress. I am glad to share with you a little of my work in the national legislature. Please follow the listed links or contact my office for more information on the topics mentioned here.

PLEASE CHECK MY WEB SITE FOR INSIDE CONGRESS NEXT WEEK

Due to Congressional mailing restrictions, **this is the last week you will receive my weekly update by e-mail until November 15.** However, you will be able to continue reading my update each week on the Internet. Just click on the "Weekly Update" link on my Web site at www.house.gov/nethercutt.

NETHERCUTT ECOTERRORISM PENALTIES PART OF NEW BIOTERROR LAW

This week President Bush signed into law a bioterrorism prevention bill passed by Congress that included part of my legislation to halt eco-terrorists.

The Bioterrorism Preparedness Act of 2001, H.R. 3448, as signed by the President, includes language I authored targeting ecoterrorism. At a hearing in February, the FBI identified ecoterrorists as the most dangerous domestic terrorism source. The Earth Liberation Front alone has claimed responsibility for more than \$40 million in property damage since 1997, and together with its partner organization, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), claimed responsibility for 137 crimes, including vandalism and arson, during 2001 alone.

The law increases penalties on eco-terrorists for damage to property, including animals or records. Violators are now subject to restitution for **all** economic damage resulting from their crimes, and will be subject to life imprisonment for crimes that lead to the death of a person.

The law also adopts my strategy of hardening research universities against terrorism, and authorizes grants to support reviews of security standards and practices. Associations representing food producers are also eligible for grants for educational programs to teach farmers how to protect themselves from attack.

This law is a significant step forward, but I still believe we must go farther to root out eco-terrorists. I'm hopeful the House will move forward with my legislation that allows for further prevention and protection of plant and animal enterprises.

GUILDS' SCHOOL GETS \$500,000 FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

The Spokane Guilds' School and Neuromuscular Center will receive \$500,000 to develop research on early intervention, specifically looking at the importance of interdisciplinary work on this field. I secured the funding in a Fiscal Year 2002 appropriations bill.

The funding will enable the Guilds' School to hold four conferences in Spokane that will feature early intervention researchers from a variety of disciplines. Topics will include early identification and assessment, educational treatment, pediatric therapies, and family involvement. Conference invitees will include regional leaders in early intervention from a variety of disciplines, families of children with disabilities, representatives of personnel training programs in higher education, and community and state agencies. Participants will help identify gaps in early intervention research. Results of the conferences will help shape appropriate research that can be carried out in the Guilds' School and will be published in a book.

As a result of this funding, the Guilds' School will be able to do critical research in our local area that will be beneficial to professionals and families caring for young children with disabilities. This facility is a model for the nation when it comes to neuromuscular care of children. I'm hopeful these conferences will produce innovative ideas that set an example to the nation of how best to care for young children with disabilities.

SENATE RESURRECTS THE DEATH TAX

Last week the House voted by a wide bipartisan majority to kill the death tax once and for all by making permanent last year's legislation that gradually phased out the tax. Unfortunately, the Senate failed to pass this legislation. This means that in 2011, the tax will rise again from the dead and affect families at the sky-high 55 percent level.

This failure to act will create a hardship for family businesses who now must take into account three scenarios over the next 10 years: phase-out of the tax, no tax and full reinstatement of the death tax in 2011. The legal and administrative costs of compliance with the complex and uncertain death tax regime inhibit the growth and expansion of businesses and farms. The death tax is an inefficient way to raise revenue. The truth is, in 2001, estate and gift taxes represented only 1.4 percent of the total Federal receipts collected. The death tax forces families to make inefficient investments and tax-avoidance planning, discourages savings and hurts small businesses and family farms. It's unfortunate that the Senate refused to bury the death tax once and for all for American families.

ON THE FLOOR

Here is a recap of the legislative activity for the week:

H.R. 4019, Permanent Marriage Penalty Relief Act of 2002. The bill passed by a vote of 271 to 142. I voted yes.

This legislation makes permanent the marriage penalty relief provisions in the tax relief package passed last year by Congress. Without this legislation, the tax would revert back to their higher levels in 2011. This legislation increases the standard deduction for married couples to twice the deduction for single taxpayers. This legislation also reduces taxes on low-income married couples by increasing the phase out range of the Earned Income Credit and simplifying the credit for taxpayers. This legislation reduces taxes on over half a million couples in Washington state.

H.J.Res. 96 - Tax Limitation Constitutional Amendment. The bill failed despite receiving 227 to 178 votes for the bill. As a Constitutional amendment, the measure required a two-thirds majority. I voted for this bill.

H.J.Res. 96 would amend the U.S. Constitution to require that any bill, resolution or other legislative measure changing the tax revenue laws considered by each House of Congress pass by two-thirds of those present and voting for the final bill. There are two exceptions to this: One, if the measure can be shown to raise taxes by a minimal amount or two, when a declaration of war is in effect and the United States is engaged in a military conflict which causes an imminent and serious threat to national security.

SCHEDULE

Last weekend I was in Lone for a townhall meeting with local residents of Pend Oreille County and was able to discuss Box Canyon Dam re-licensing and wilderness issues with people there.

I spoke with students from the Colville Campus of the Community Colleges of Spokane about the future of post-secondary education in rural areas and rural placement incentives. I met with representatives of the Kalispel Tribal Council to discuss their concerns regarding Box Canyon Dam re-licensing.

I met with Lone's new Mayor Steve Davis and Leanna Powers regarding local economic development and Lone's water system. I met with PUD Commissioner Dan Petersen and Jim Scheel regarding their concerns over the RTO West proposal. I met with Bill and Evelyn Meany to get an update on the Ponderay Newsprint Company's local concerns. I participated in a ride-along with the City of Spokane Police Saturday night.

I met with Jerry Daniels, president and CEO of Boeing Aircraft and Missiles regarding defense funding. Mark Garrett, a community AIDS advocate of Spokane spoke with me

at my office regarding HIV/AIDS research and support funding. I attended the Australian Prime Minister's address to Congress. The International Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies brought a bald eagle named "Challenger" to my office for a visit. Gov. Tom Ridge briefed members of Congress on homeland security. I met with Curtis Fackler of Payroll Plus in Spokane regarding small business issues.

I met with Future Farmers of America students Brycen Bye and Becky Beale of Pomeroy who were in Washington, D.C., to attend a leadership conference. I participated in an Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee meeting to prepare for consideration of the agriculture spending bill this summer.

I met with Bruce Eldredge, CEO of the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture regarding the museum. I met with members of the International Dairy Foods Association, including J.T. Wilcox of Wilcox Farms regarding dairy policy issues. I met with Brian DeNike, Jeff Wordell, Gary Mellinger, and Paul Vose of Enerphaze Corporation of Spokane regarding technology issues. I met with Doug Jacobsen and others with the OFAC Practitioner's Group regarding trade issues.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

I always enjoy hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to you in any matter. Here are some of the ways you may reach me, especially if you know of others who may want to receive this report each week:

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